

**MINUTES
DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET HEARINGS
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY-CITY BUILDING
ROOM 113
THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2002
1:00 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Bob Workman, Chair
Bernie Heier, Vice Chair
Kathy Campbell
Larry Hudkins
Ray Stevens

Others Present: Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer
Gwen Thorpe, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Dave Kroeker, Budget and Fiscal Officer
Amy Prenda, Director of Legal Research and Analysis for
Kissel/E&S Associates
Melissa Koci, County Clerk's Office

The Chair opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

REGISTER OF DEEDS (604)

Present were Dan Nolte, Registrar of Deeds, and Maura Kelly Tolzin, Deputy Registrar of Deeds.

Nolte indicated one of the main changes in his budget is the Official's salary, which was budgeted for six months. He said in line item 3091, Temporary Services, his office is using a temporary employee to augment the staff during heavy times, which was budgeted for six months also.

Campbell asked if the revenue was going to hold.

Nolte said the activity is extremely strong and running ahead of last year. He said refinancing doesn't seem to be happening as much and they are getting more one-page filings, which cost less than filing a deed of trust.

Kroeker asked if the County Assessor and Register of Deeds budget should be put together or kept separate.

Campbell suggested discussing it at the Mid-Year budget review.

Kroeker said there is a provision in the Auditor's contract that an audit needs to be performed when there is a change in Elected Officials, either at the time of change or at a later date to determine that the proper funds are being transferred to the new official. He said he would look at the contract to see when the proper time would be to perform the audit.

Hudkins asked Kroeker to review the auditor's contract, report back to Eagan and put it on a Thursday staff meeting to answer any questions the Board may have.

Campbell indicated she would like to see a list of the FTE requests from all departments, mark the ones that have been included in their budget and put them on hold. She also wanted to know if there are any broad categories the Board wants to see like conferences and travel.

Hudkins said he would like to see a list of capital expenditures.

Campbell suggested telling each department that money has been set aside for travel but there will be no traveling for the first six months, or until after the Regular or Special Sessions meet.

Campbell said the Board also needs to know what the deadlines are this year because the public hearing may need to be changed. She said if the Special Session meets in August, the budget shouldn't be passed beforehand, and if the County could legally wait a couple of weeks, it might be to the County's benefit.

Workman asked if it would be helpful to know what each department pays for outside rent.

Stevens said they should look at Trabert Hall's costs because if the employees are moved, it would cost lower than what they are paying now.

Hudkins said he has a problem with F³ and the money they are spending on their building on 9th Street. He also suggested doing something with the Old Federal Building.

JUVENILE PROBATION (673)

Lori Griggs, Chief Probation Officer, appeared and distributed documentation regarding her budget reduction summary (Exhibit A).

Griggs reported most of the services in her budget include the two County paid Probation Officers that do pre-adjudication and predisposition intensive supervision of youth as an alternative to placement in the Juvenile Detention Center.

Hudkins asked if the house arrest officers are County employees or under contract.

Griggs said they are under contract which is renewed yearly and there isn't really an increase in that category. She said the money is carried over from the State and there was some money left over, so the amount budgeted isn't that much. Griggs said the two employees are housed in her office in the Hall of Justice with ready access to the Judges, kids and probation officers.

In regard to her budget reduction summary, she could reduce some basic supplies, printing and equipment.

COUNTY ASSESSOR (605)

Present were Norm Agena, County Assessor, and Rob Ogden, Chief Deputy County Assessor.

Agena indicated two of his cars on the list in his budget, vehicle A-2 and A-4, are being put up for auction because one is unsafe to drive and the other is junk.

Agena also reported he put together figures as to what it costs additionally to run a reappraisal and his data processing time for running all of the reports is \$100,000. He said the estimate he received from data processing on his budget is not going to cover his data processing costs for running the reappraisal next year.

Kroeker said \$50,000 was added to the County Assessor's budget this year and he believed part of it was going to be used to start the reappraisal.

Agena said they will probably need another \$50,000.

Ogden said one of the things that costs a lot of money is running the modeling part and in 1994 when everything was reappraised, they had to limit how many times the program could be run. He said OASIS has a new product that the County Assessor does not have yet, and shouldn't cost anything to run on a PC.

Agena said it is costing \$4,000 to run a report one time. He also said there is a new online personal property program available at this time and right now they are dealing with the signature requirement on the form and are thinking about eliminating it or assigning a pin number to the person. Agena said it's a program that is setup for the major filers which is done online. He said there are roughly 11,000 total filers and if they could get 5% of those the first year, including the major filers, it would save a lot of time doing handwork in personal property. At this time he doesn't have a cost.

Agena also said if the County Assessor went away from the mainframe system, the \$300,000 data processing costs would go away. He said it would probably cost \$1 million to convert the data, set it up and get it running on a PC Oracle system.

Campbell asked how the customer will access the data.

Agena said the customer wouldn't know if the information was coming from the mainframe or Oracle and he would have his own domain as a stand alone website that would be used for more than public information.

Campbell asked if it would affect any linkage of any other departments.

Agena said it would not.

Campbell suggested taking a serious look at the change and the overall costs down the road through a NACO lease purchase.

Kroeker asked about the Register of Deeds system and if it would be left alone.

Agena said it all ties in together, but some of the Register of Deeds system would be left alone. He said it would be easier to make a conversion into an Oracle system than into a mainframe system.

Campbell asked how long it would take to get the project implemented.

Agena said probably a year to put it together and a year to get it converted and running.

Eagan said the County Assessor is a significant part of the mainframe usage and maybe a letter needs to be written to the City.

Campbell suggested sending Kroeker and Stevens to the ISPC meeting to discuss the County Assessor switching to their own site.

Agena also reported he needs three new vehicles because the two up for auction will be out of his fleet. He said they will be doing field reviews for the 2003 appraisal and with the cars he has they will have to be shuffled around.

Workman asked about his budget regarding the Official's salary and what was being budgeted.

Agena said the only thing his budget reflects is when Scott Gaines starts in July. Agena said the budgets probably won't be separate after the first of the year because of the way everything will be tied into the County Assessor's existing operation. Agena agreed that at mid-year the consolidated budget should be looked at with the elected official.

Agena said this year they are refining the process of the comp sheets that are being sent out to the people, and a mini page off of the website will be included.

Ogden said next year residential properties will have a lower percentage of increase than they did in 1994 and commercial properties will have a big change because there haven't been a lot of changes since then. Ogden also said with greenbelt special values he doesn't know what will happen because they haven't heard what the State is going to do. He said the ag values have not changed for the past five years.

JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER (678)

Dennis Banks, Juvenile Detention Center Director, Michelle Schindler, Juvenile Detention Center Deputy Director, and Judy Foote, Administrative Services Officer, appeared and distributed documentation regarding their budget reduction plan (Exhibit B).

Banks reported there were several times over the past six months when there were over 60 kids in detention. He said they moved into the new facility on February 11, 2002 and on February 25, 2002 there were 52 kids in detention, February 26th, 55 kids and until mid April they never went under 55 kids. Banks said there were 17 days where they had over 60 youths in the facility, in March they averaged 58 kids a day and now they are averaging around 48 kids a day. He said the evaluations have doubled, there was an increase in OJS kids and not much of an increase in contract common kids.

Banks said they are currently not using the E-pod cell and would be able to eliminate the five Juvenile Detention Officers out of his budget as long as there is not a surge in population, otherwise double bedrooms could be used. Banks also said they could get by without the Clerk Typist I even though there is a heavier work load.

Banks also said he would like to take the responsibility of distributing and dispensing of medication away from his staff. He believes someone who is highly trained in the area like a nurse or nursing assistant should be dispensing the medication, not his staff.

Banks said he would also like to build a garage on site to store the lawn mowers and snowblower, which could be taken out of his budget if needed.

Hudkins asked where the equipment was stored before.

Banks said there was a shed the County built for the Attention Center that stayed on the property when they moved.

Hudkins asked how essential it would be to have a Nursing Assistant.

Banks said his staff gets minimal training in dispensing psychotropic and other medications whereas nursing assistants and LPN's get extensive training. He said his staff does not know what certain medications do and what impact it may have, but the medical people do.

Hudkins asked Banks if he has talked with anyone who would be willing to come in and do some in-service training for his staff so they are more aware of how to dispense medications and the side effects.

Banks said his staff did have training by the Health Department and Unidose Company.

Schindler said it takes about two hours of the supervisor's time for medication distribution and there are five medication distributions. During that time a youth can choose not to take their med's and then a certain follow-up would have to be done. Schindler believes the nurse would be able to administer follow-up care more quickly, instead of the staff calling several people to deal with it. Also, a lot of the med's have side effects and a nurse can monitor how the kid's are doing, whereas a staff member wouldn't be able to do that.

Banks said most of the nurse's time is spent seeing kids and doing initial assessments, which has to be done within 24 hours.

Campbell said Corrections has indicated the need for a nurse and wondered if there would be a way to split the load between both departments.

Schindler said if another nurse was added at the lower rate of pay and not one with a 4-year degree, that person would be able to help with some of the medical billing costs and other medical projects to help out Judy Foote.

Kroeker said there was a meeting in December where the Board asked Banks to stay with the current billing rate, but as the budget for this year was being put together, he was asked to look at some of the other counties.

Banks said a letter was sent out to the other counties telling them the Detention Center was looking at a possible 25% increase.

The Board agreed Banks would come back to the Board and discuss the rates at a Thursday staff meeting.

Banks also said there was one thing that wasn't put in his budget, which was the service agreement for the computerized security system. He said the warranty runs out on the system in October and the renewal is \$1,825 a month, for a \$14,600 year increase.

MENTAL HEALTH CENTER (063)

Dean Settle, Community Mental Health Center Director, and Judy Tannahill, Administrative Services Officer, appeared and distributed documentation regarding his budget reduction plan (Exhibit C).

Settle first indicated he could eliminate the coordinator position which has become vacant due to the death of an employee and they could reduce the subscriptions and continuing education. He said the psychologist hours at the Crisis Center were on an as needed basis and his activities have now been reduced to 40 hours.

Settle said he thought seriously about continuing with the Sex Offender Treatment Program because they are on a monthly basis and are receiving commitments from the Mental Health Board for persons who need on-going structure in their lives. He said he reduced Dr. Mary Payne's time from ten hours a week to five hours a week.

Settle said they eliminated all equipment, car and van needs and replacement of computers. With those reductions stated above, Settle said he only came up with a \$203,672 reduction.

Settle also said he went back to Region V, who has agreed to allow the Mental Health Center to draw down post commitment day costs, which is the \$130 a day each county has been contributing for post commitment days. He said there is \$500,000 in Region V's account for that purpose. He said the requirement regarding the post commitment money in the contract would require treatment at the Crisis Center.

With regard to Medicaid reimbursement, Settle said he should be able to get reimbursement on that for an increase in revenue of \$100,000. He also said the fees for emergency services provision can increase to cover cost of service, which has not been increased in a number of years.

Settle noted an RFP has been issued for engaging a collection service to assist with collection of fees from clients who can afford them, but who refuse all efforts to collect.

Hudkins asked who they are contracted with for medical services.

Settle said they are contracted with BryanLGH.

Settle indicated the following are top priorities as far as making a budget reduction, with the first two being promising, if needed:

- * A staff member who would like to go to part-time and work 20 hours a week.
- * Reduction of one specialist position because of death, saving \$48,926.
- * New staff, still on probation could be let go, but would need the position at a later date.
- * Reduce the overtime hours of nursing from 80 to 64 hours.
- * Reduction of one full-time staff psychiatrist.

Settle indicated he looked at whether the Mental Health Center can truly afford two full-time psychiatric positions or whether they would be better off going to contracts for the positions, which would cost more per hour. Settle said in his reduction plan he proposed reducing one of the medical directors from 40 to 30 hours.

Settle indicated there are some patients who come to the Mental Health Center requesting a female psychiatrist and until the nurse practitioner was added all they had were males. He believes the customer should have the option to choose whether or not they want a male or female.

Settle also noted he received a call from Child Guidance who are in the process of recruiting a new Psychiatrist. He said the new psychiatrist would work 20 hours a week at Child Guidance and wondered where that person could spend the rest of their time.

Settle said under the budget scenario he presented, the nurse practitioner would work no more than 10 hours at a contracted hourly rate, which is more than a staff psychiatrist salary rate.

Hudkins asked if the County is mandated to have two psychiatrists.

Settle didn't believe so and said they have 800 people right now who are just seeing the psychiatrist for medication, education and injections, which has increased because of the new intakes they have on board.

Settle also said the doctor patient relationship is a very private, personal relationship and there are patients who have searched for a psychiatrist they have confidence in, one who understands their situation and understands the proper medication regimen.

Campbell said the Board is not making any decisions today, but is concerned about the Community Mental Health Center and what will happen in the Special Session.

Settle said as the community grows, the Mental Health Center will have increased demand. He said there has been more demand since 9-11 and as people get laid off from their jobs and are depressed.

Stevens said if the potential \$200,000 to \$300,000 revenue figures were to hold up and the staff changes that were talked about could definitely be done, perhaps the number of dollars would be pretty close if the staff psychiatrists hours were both reduced.

Workman said Dr. Roy is the only psychiatrist who does the hospital admissions for the Mental Health Center.

The Board agreed they appreciated the work the Mental Health Center is doing as far as finding alternatives to reducing the budget.

Settle said timing is right for mental health and substance abuse to be put out for public review and comment and used as a justification for a small increase on everyone's property taxes. He said the role of mental health will be in more demand as Lancaster County grows.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT (648)

Brian Pillard, Records Manager, appeared and distributed documentation regarding his budget reduction plan (Exhibit D).

Pillard said his office is currently moving records from \$8.50 square foot rental in the office space to \$3.50 rental in the Record Center. He said Adult Probation just moved all of their filing cabinets to the Center and they just began scanning all of the Personnel applications to convert them into microfilm.

Pillard indicated he does a lot of work for the City and receives \$450 a month from Information Services, \$450 from the Health Department, \$175 from other City departments and \$100 from the Fire Department. He said most of the information is routine mail, Information Services report deliveries and averages about \$56 a day.

In his reduction plan, Pillard said he could reduce the one time microfilm duplicating project for a title company, the estimate from Information Services could be reduced and maybe canceling the microfilming labor contract with Community Alternatives.

Pillard indicated he has a request that has been on hold since April for the part-time storage clerk to go to full time status, who earns the benefits of health and life insurance already. He said there has been an increase in the amount of records he is getting and an increase in the amount of filing of papers that get added to the files. Pillard said it would be an increase of \$7,568 plus FICA and pension.

Pillard also said his fax machine no longer works and he is in need of a new one.

Eagan said Pillard's option are to go through Purchasing and get a standard fax machine for \$850 or go to Best Buy and purchase one for \$200.

MOTION: Campbell moved and Hudkins seconded to notify Purchasing that Brian Pillard needs a new fax machine and see if they can find him a less expensive one or authorize him to buy a \$199 fax machine. On call Campbell, Stevens, Workman, Hudkins voted aye. Motion carried.

Hudkins asked about Line 3053 and the 94% increase.

Pillard said Data Processing sends out the numbers and he usually just puts them in his budget. He said there is a personnel cost of \$5,490 for application development that he is unaware of.

Gwen Thorpe, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, thought maybe it had to do with Tower Trim.

Campbell said all of the FTE requests are going to be on hold until the Special Session meets and questioned his need for the extra person.

Pillard also mentioned the Records Center is now approaching full capacity and he just received a request from LES to take 1,100 boxes. He said he charges \$.32 per month, per box and 1,000 boxes would be an extra \$320 a month or \$3,840 a year.

Hudkins asked if has spoken with Don Killeen about the possibility of expanding the area within the building.

Pillard says he has and if another off site storage area could be found for the Health Department, more space could become available.

Workman asked Pillard for a letter indicating the projected space needs and the revenue.

DIVERSION SERVICES

Eric McMasters, Director of Diversion Services, appeared and distributed documentation regarding his proposed budget (Exhibit E).

McMasters said the Pre-trial Diversion Program, the Bad Check Restitution Program and the STOP Traffic Diversion Program are still in operation and some of the objectives for next year are the following:

- * Divert 125-150 felony cases from the criminal justice system
- * Maintain completion rate for felony diversions at 66-70%
- * Divert 400-500 County Attorney misdemeanors cases
- * Divert 700-800 City Attorney misdemeanor cases
- * Divert 10,000 traffic offenders to the STOP program
- * \$7,000-\$7,500 in bad checks referred to County Attorney

McMasters said projected revenues from the STOP program will give the City of Lincoln \$75,000, Lancaster County \$20,000 and the Law Enforcement Equipment Fund \$70,000. He also indicated there was a 5% increase in cases this last year and there are currently 1,042 people in the Diversion program. McMasters also said there were over 31,000 hours of community service donated and he believed some of the community service work could be done to benefit the City and County and not just non-profit organizations.

McMasters said STOP registrations went up 21%, registration fees went up 29%, and the City and County's share went from \$7 to \$9. He said in the first quarter of this year he is already showing a great increase in the STOP Traffic Diversion Program. McMasters said the Legislature passed a bill to regulate STOP programs which gives the Motor Vehicle Department control over the STOP program. He said hearings will be held later this year with a target implementation date of January 1, 2003.

McMasters said Diversion Services established approximately 300 non-check restitution accounts and there was over \$458,000 collected last year.

DISTRICT COURT (624)

Judge Flowers, appeared and distributed documentation regarding her budget reduction plan (Exhibit F) and said she could do without the new furniture and witness chairs. Flowers also believed she made a mistake in Personnel services and asked Kroeker to help fix it.

Flowers said she doesn't really have any control over Legal Services and Juror's Fees and the Judges have taken a look at Guardian ad Litem fees and discussed whether court appointed counsel needs to be appointed or not.

Flowers also said fees for court appointed counsel have not been raised for a number of years and if the Indigent Defense Standards are adopted, they will be required to increase the fees. She said if the Indigent Standards are adopted, the District Court's budget will not decrease, however, the Public Defender's budget will decrease.

Stevens asked Flowers if she had a personal opinion about adopting the Standards.

Flowers said her concerns with the Standards have nothing to do with the money and she believes court appointed counsel is very underpaid, have been for a long time and qualified counsel should be appointed.

Flowers also said with regard to jurors fees, the only way to impact the fees would be to have less trials. She said right now they have eight jury terms and would not like to go below that.

MOTION: Stevens moved and Hudkins seconded to adjourn the meeting at 5:02 p.m. On call Campbell, Stevens, Hudkins and Workman voted aye. Motion carried.

Bruce Medcalf
County Clerk